

## NOT UNDER THE LAW

### TEXT: ROMANS 7:1-6

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Two weeks ago I preached on the “The Way of Victory Explained.” This is the theme of Romans 6--8.
2. Last week, we focused on the distinction between law and grace -- we "are not under the law, but under grace." Sanctification does not come from the law.
3. Victory over sin is possible (6:1, 2). But it is by grace, not by the law. We are not saved by the law, and we are not sanctified by the law.
4. J. Vernon McGee wrote, “Multitudes of the saints accept defeat as normal Christian living. There are many saints who are satisfied to continue on the low level of a sad, shoddy, sloppy life” (*Thru the Bible, Romans 7*).
5. The Christ-life is not conformity to a code of laws. Philippians 3:9 says, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."
6. Romans 6:14 is not only the key verse and it is the transitional verse in chapter 6. Here we see the key to a life of holiness and victory over the power of sin.
7. We are now “under grace,” and God’s grace provides the power not to sin. The law commands but the law cannot enable.
8. The idea behind the term “under grace” is God’s gracious bestowment of inward power to obey Him (Rom. 6:14).
9. The law demands obedience but grace supplies the will to obey and the power to obey. Grace breaks the mastery of sin as law could not.
10. People that attempt to please God by keeping the law will always wind up frustrated. If being under grace delivers us from the power of sin, then being under law puts us under the dominion of sin (6:14, 15).
11. Stephen said to the Jews in Acts 7:53, “(You) have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”
12. In Acts 15:10, Peter referred to the law as a yoke, “which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”
13. James 2:10 says, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”
14. Many people are confused over the term “under grace.” Some mistakenly believe that “under grace” means “anything goes.” That is just as wrong as trying to put some one under the law.

15. "Under grace" does not mean license to sin (Rom. 6:15). Rather, it refers to the power not to sin.
16. Whereas Romans chapter 6 stresses that we are under grace; chapter 7 stresses that we are not under the law.
17. Donald Grey Barnhouse, in his commentary on the book of Romans, wrote these words, "Romans 7 is one of the most misunderstood chapters in the Bible because most people read it with the attitude, 'It can't mean what it says!' The theme is that the believer is no longer under the law of God because he has been joined to Christ in His resurrection. Like an inexperienced swimmer, the average Christian stands in terror of such deep water as complete abandonment to the grace of God. He fears to be borne along on the will of God in his daily life – to cast himself completely on the direction of the Holy Spirit. But, once he gets over the panic of such self-abandonment, he finds that the grace of God sustains, carries, cradles, and calms him – and he lives eternity in time. This is the purpose of Romans 7 – to help the willing believer to cast himself into the depths of grace."

## **I. THE POWER OF LAW IS TERMINATED BY DEATH**

1. Romans 7:1 is a continuation of chapter 6 – the apostle Paul is continuing in the same vein – the Christian (Paul addresses them as "brethren") must yield to the grace of God and not to the law.
2. Whereas Romans chapter 6 emphasizes we are dead to sin; chapter 7 emphasizes we are "dead to the law" (7:4).
3. "For I speak to them that know the law" (7:1) has reference to Jews, who understand this important principle – the power of the law is terminated by death.
4. To make this point, Paul uses the illustration of a wife who has been freed to marry another man because her husband is now dead (7:1-3). It was the husband's death that freed her from the law.
5. The idea is that death dissolves legal obligation, and that the wife of a dead man is now legally free to marry another man.
6. This is Paul's point: the wife represents the Christian under grace. The dead husband represents "the old man" (cf. Rom. 6:6), i.e., our unregenerate self before we were saved.
7. The problem is this -- "the old man" is dead but many Christians do not believe it (cf. Rom. 6:6, 11; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:3, 9, 10).
8. The death of the first "husband" (Romans 7:1-3) signifies that our old man is crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6).
9. The wife with the dead husband would be foolish to refuse to get remarried on the basis of the law, because the power of the law is terminated by death.

Likewise the Christian is foolish to try and put himself (or others) under the law.

10. The application is given in verse 4 (“Wherefore...” – Rom. 7:4) -- now that the first husband (the old unregenerate man) is dead, the Christian is free for union with the risen Christ.
11. Union with Christ brings forth “fruit unto God” (7:4; cf. 6:22). Our Lord said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

## **II. THE DEATH OF THE OLD MAN, AND OUR UNION WITH CHRIST**

1. Three times in this passage, the apostle Paul asks the question, “Know ye not?” (6:3, 16; 7:1). All three of these questions deal with our union with Christ.
2. In Romans 6:3, we should know that we are dead to sin on account of our union with Christ.
3. In Romans 6:16, we should know that we are no longer servants to sin on account of our union with Christ.
4. And in Romans 7:1, we should know that we are no longer under the law on account of our union with Christ. When our old man was alive we were “bound by the law” (7:2).
5. When we understand that our old man was crucified with Christ we are “loosed from the law” (7:2b) and “free from the law” (7:3) and “delivered from the law” (7:6).
6. When we understand what Christ did for us on the cross, we learn that not only is “the old man” (unregenerate man) dead, we also learn that we are now “married to another” (7:4).
7. This picture of marriage is seen throughout the Bible. Using the figure of marriage, the apostle Paul teaches what union with Christ really means.
8. Just as a bride is joined to her husband at the altar, we have been joined to Christ at the cross (cf. II Cor. 11:1, 2; Eph. 5:31, 32; John 3:29; Rev. 19:7-9).
9. Marriage between a man and a woman is the highest form of earthly union, and it is a beautiful symbol of our union with Christ.
10. Therefore, it is wicked to try and defile this beautiful picture by talking about so-called “gay marriage.”
11. If the marriage of a man and woman pictures the relationship between the Christian and Christ; then so-called “gay marriage” is a sordid picture of a defiled sinner in bondage to the devil.

### III. THE PURPOSE FOR OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

1. There are two key words here and we already studied them in Romans 6 – “fruit” (7:4) and “serve” (7:6). God wants fruitfulness and service.
2. Fruitfulness indicates Christian character. The fruit of the Spirit, described in Galatians 5:22 and 23 – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance – is an expression of the Christian’s character as developed by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
3. According to the Bible, you are either walking in the Spirit or walking in the flesh. Galatians 5:16 and 17 says, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”
4. Then the next verse, Gal. 5:18 says, “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” This is an important principle, so let us compare this with Romans 7:5.
5. The law was given to control the flesh, but it failed through the weakness of the flesh (cf. Rom. 8:3). The flesh does not like any restraints and so the flesh rebelled and chafed at the law.
6. The flesh threw off all the restraints of the law, and by doing so brought down the penalty for breaking the law – death (cf. 6:23).
7. Both Romans 6 & 7 teach us that service and fruitfulness go together (Rom. 7:6b). We are saved to serve (cf. 6:18, 19).
8. When a man is born again everything is new. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
9. Romans 6:4 says, “like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
10. And Romans 7:6 says, “that we should serve in newness of spirit.”
11. Before we were saved we were servants of sin (6:20), but now we are servants of God.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Before we conclude, I should say a few words about this phrase found in Romans 7:6 – “the oldness of the letter.”
2. The context tells us “the letter” refers to the law. Furthermore, the contrast with “newness of spirit” indicates that trying to please God by conforming to the law results in spiritual deadness.
3. In II Corinthians 3:6, Paul says, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,” meaning the law condemns but the spirit of grace saves and sanctifies.
4. Are you lost? Then you can be saved only by the grace of God.

5. Are you carnal, stubborn, backslidden, or cold? Then you can be restored and sanctified – not by the law, but by the grace of God.